

## 6. Defining Noah's Flood as a Type (Genesis 6–11; Moses 8)

The worldwide deluge God brought upon the earth in the days of Noah, which destroyed men and beasts, was a consequence of humanity's corruption and violence: "God saw that the wickedness of man on the earth was great and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth—men and beasts, crawling creatures, and the birds of the air—for I regret that I made them.' But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. . . . And God looked on the earth, and verily it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth. And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence by them. See, I will destroy them with the earth'" (Genesis 6:5–8, 12–13):

"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day all the wellsprings of the mighty deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And rain came on the earth for forty days and forty nights. . . . And the flood stayed forty days on the earth. And the waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose above the earth. And the waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark [floated] on the water's surface. The waters on the earth predominated until all high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits high until the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth—both fowl and cattle, beasts and crawling creatures that crawl on the earth, and all men. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life and all that was upon the dry land died. Every living thing was destroyed that existed on the face of the ground. Men and cattle, crawling creatures, and the birds of the air were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah remained and those with him in the ark" (Genesis 7:11–12, 17–23).

Among thirty ancient events the prophet Isaiah draws on to predict new versions of them at the end of the world is the Flood in the days of Noah. The new Flood, although similarly destructive of men and beasts, is manmade, launched on the world by a militaristic superpower from the North codenamed Assyria. By comparing Assyria's tyrannical king and his alliance of nations to the sea in commotion, heaving itself beyond its bounds, and to a river in flood, sweeping everything before it, Isaiah draws on ancient Near Eastern mythology. Isaiah calls the king of Assyria by the names "Sea" and "River," identifying him with an ancient Near Eastern power of chaos called "Sea" and "River."

Beginning with his own people, the Lord permits these powers of chaos to dominate until the earth is cleansed of wickedness: "My Lord has in store one mighty and strong: as a ravaging hailstorm sweeping down, or like an inundating deluge of mighty waters, he will hurl them to the ground by his hand" (Isaiah 28:2); "My Lord will cause to come up over them the great and mighty waters of the River—the king of Assyria in all his glory. He will rise up over all his channels and overflow all his banks. He will sweep into Judea [like] a flood and, passing through, reach the very neck; his outspread wings will span the breadth of your land, O Immanuel" (Isaiah 8:7–8); "He shall be stirred up against them in that day, even as the Sea is

stirred up” (Isaiah 5:30); “His purpose shall be to annihilate and to exterminate nations not a few” (Isaiah 10:7).

When the new Flood has served its purpose, however, the Lord relents and receives back his people who repent: “This is to me as in the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would no more flood the earth. So I swear to have no more anger toward you, never again to rebuke you” (Isaiah 54:9).

In the end, Assyria and its alliance meet the same fate they imposed on the world: “Woe to the many peoples in an uproar, who rage like the raging of the seas—tumultuous nations, in commotion like the turbulence of mighty waters! Nations may roar like the roaring of great waters, but when he rebukes them they will flee far away; they will be driven before the wind like chaff on the mountains, or as whirling dust in a storm. At evening time shall be the catastrophe, and before morning they shall be no more. This is the lot of those who plunder us, the fate of those who despoil us” (Isaiah 17:12–14). Assyria is itself subjugated to God: “At that time shall tribute be brought to the Lord of Hosts from a nation perpetually on the move, from a nation dreaded far and wide, a people continually infringing, whose rivers have annexed their lands, to the place of the name of the Lord of Hosts: Mount Zion” (Isaiah 18:7).

(Much of this material is taken from *Windows on the Prophecy of Isaiah*, 78–80.)